Leys News

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ISSUE 114 | February 2014

New Parking for Blackbird Leys

HIGH quality parking for 18 vehicles including a disabled parking bay have been provided at the junction of Blackbird Leys Road and Balfour Road. The Blackbird Leys Road scheme is the second parking scheme to be delivered this financial year as part of Oxford City Council's Great Estates project. The scheme is to highway standards with a block paving finish and raised kerbs. New shrub beds and tree planting have been included in the finish. In addition, improvements have been made to the adjacent grassed area where bollards have been installed to prevent parking there.

Areas that had been damaged by vehicle parking have been reinstated as part of the scheme.

Councillor Scott Seamons, Board Member for Housing and Ward Councillor for Northfield Brook, said: "This project has provided not only parking spaces for residents on Blackbird Leys road but also improved the quality of the external environment in this area—the main entrance to the Leys. Alongside the new parking spaces, new hedges and trees have been planted and the remaining grass will be protected, the end result is much tidier.

"Through this investment we are increasing the number of purpose designed off-street parking spaces, a move welcomed by local residents and a common request in our consultations surrounding Leys Regeneration.

"Our estates were built many decades ago when there were fewer cars. It's important that we provide additional car parking spaces to meet demand and so people are not forced to park on the grass making the area look untidy.

"We have identified a number of further areas in Blackbird Leys and across the city for additional parking though with today's financial pressures it will take time to deliver in all these areas."

This is the second of five projects that Oxford City Council are working on to improve the parking facilities on the estates in Oxford. The team will be starting work on the third project in the series later this month at Monks Close in Blackbird Leys. Oxford City Council has approved planning permission for the five projects for this financial year, which form part of the capital programme of car parking works costing £500,000.

The Great Estates programme which alongside car parking schemes such as these will look to improve the environment in communal areas in and around flat blocks continues during the next financial year with an expanded budget of just over £1million to be spent across the city.

Councillor Scott Seamons in front of the new parking space.

Happy Cooks at BLAP!

Cooking sessions at Blackbird Leys Adventure Playground. See page 3

SUCCESS FOR STUDENTS!

Oxford Academy's Academic Awards Evening. Page 11

ACADEMY BOYS ARE CHAMPIONS!

Junior Sports Team of the Year. See back page

Editor's Letter. 2
Green Fingers. 3
Agnes Smith Advice Centre. . 5
Police Update. 5
Pet Hates. 6
Growing Up Grumpy. 7
Leys Fashion. 8
Leys Learning. 11
Art and Culture Focus. . . . 13
What's on. 14–15
Sport. 16

Leys News
Issue 114
February 2014

Leys News is a not-for-profit business dedicated to providing news and information to the whole community. We are not affiliated to any political party, and we operate an equal opportunities policy. We encourage any resident to get involved in our work.

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Letter from the Editor

Hello!

SO HOW are those NewYear's resolutions holding up? Congratulations to all of you who have managed to see them through until at least the end of the month, and for the rest of you-well there is always next year!

I tend to have my new start in February as January is just a time for hibernating, eating chocolate and staying in if you ask me, so if you didn't kick start the official new year with a healthy living regime why not join me in February instead?!

While January may be considered a quiet month for many, at Leys News, 2014 has started with a bang! A new community newspaper group from Reading has now joined the Oxford Community Media stable (*see article right*), which means that we now have nine different titles in our group and a heavy workload for the next 12 months. This is, of course, fantastic news for us, and all the communities in Oxford and Reading who are feeling the benefit of having their own hyperlocal paper.

If 2014 is going to be your year to try something new, then why not volunteer and get involved with our project? We will be running regular training workshops for anyone who would like to know more about community newspapers and our first session held a couple of weeks ago was a great success.

We always need keen writers and photographers so please do email me to find out more at editor@leysnews.co.uk

Have a great month

Sarah

NEW GROUP LAUNCHES

By Zoe Brown

THE latest community to join the Oxford Community Media group is Southcote in Reading, and a group of volunteers are currently on a six week course, learning about community journalism.

Volunteers are learning about proof reading, page layout and interview techniques. They are being trained by Sarah Edwards, the Group Editor from Oxford Community Media and Leys News. Everyone is working hard to get articles, adverts and information for the whole community, ready. They have already appointed an editor, photographer and allocated columns and articles to other members.

Volunteers are busy deciding on a name for the paper, and organising members of the community to deliver the paper once published, as well as scouting the local area and talking to residents of Southcote about stories.

A number of important articles are currently being written by people about local issues and the many local groups for all ages that run in Southcote.

Winners! **LAST month's colouring competition winner's are Kyran, age 7 (left), and Shazia, age 4 (right). They both win a Transformers 87 Piece Art Set. For this month's colouring competition turn to page 12.**

Oxfordshire Unlimited

Supporting and Empowering People with Disabilities

You are invited to an informal OU coffee morning

At The Clockhouse
Long Ground, Greater Leys, Oxford OX4 7FX

No booking required and no charge, yes it is free and guests welcome. Just drop in for a cuppa, and a chat in a relaxed friendly atmosphere. You are welcome to bring your own food.

Meet up with other likeminded members or even one of the OU committee members. There are over 380 members; together we form an influential team with a wealth of knowledge.

Thursday 30 January 2014
from 12 noon to 2 pm.
Make it a date and enter it into your diary now!

The Clock House has a large car park and the Stagecoach bus No. 12 stops outside the Clock House every 30 minutes.

The Clock House is fully accessible for wheelchairs.

The Clock House has disabled toilet facility.

Unlimited are looking at setting up 'Drop-in Meetings' in other areas in the County so that members can raise information/concerns/issues which effect their area. We are currently trying to set up a similar meeting in Banbury. If you have any ideas or suggestions about local meetings please contact us.

Contact Details: talk to Dave Holmes on 01865 77 38 40

Email: membership@oxfordshireunlimited.org
www.oxfordshireunlimited.org
Post to: 4 Longlands Road, Oxford OX4 6BP

SUBMISSIONS

Leys News welcomes submissions and ideas for articles and photographs from all sectors of the community. If you would like to send us a press release about your community project please email it to editor@leysnews.co.uk and we will consider it for publication in a future issue.

Please note: do not embed photos and logos into word documents but sent send them as separate picture files.

The next issue of Leys News will be delivered on 26 February and the deadline for advertising and editorial copy is 15 February.

Calling all sportsmen and women!

Would you like your sporting achievements featured in Leys News?

Email us at editor@leysnews.co.uk or call 01865 711756

WANT TO ADVERTISE IN LEYS NEWS?

To discuss your advert email John at advertising@leysnews.co.uk or call 01865 711756

WHAT'S COOKING AT BLAP?

LOCAL children who attend BLAP have the chance to take part in cooking sessions three times a week, and thanks to some much needed extra funds will soon have new equipment to use.

Sue price from BLAP, said: "The children cook a variety of dishes. At the moment they are trying to use recipes that use the cooker hob as the oven burns the bottoms of the food while the top is slow to cook."

Sue added: "However, a solution is near. Councillor Val Smith has found money via Oxfordshire County Council's Councillor's Big Society fund to buy a new oven, and Blackbird Leys Parish Council is funding a new fridge, as the old one needs defrosting once a week! We also need to replace the doors on the cupboards and install a dishwasher. With toast and hot chocolate being offered at the after school club and frequent cooking it is important to make sure we have things as hygienic as possible."

BLAP would like to improve the kitchen before the spring half term play scheme. If any readers would be willing to use their DIY skills to help with the refurbishment, please contact Alston Quammie on 01865 236646 / 0753093369

■ The spring half term play scheme runs from Monday 17 to Friday 21 February from 10am–4pm.

Eight to 13-year-olds are all welcome. The fee is £4 a day. Any organised outings that are planned will incur an extra fee.

Alfie burns the cakes: Alfie Raven (*centre*) with Xavier McKoy (*right*) and Loqman Mattary (*left*) were disappointed that their cakes had burnt yet again.

Young people get active on the Leys

THERE are no excuses for anyone who lives in the Leys to be bored, thanks to a range of fun activities for young people aged 11 and over. On Friday evenings and Sunday afternoons there is now the chance to learn new skills and have fun at the same time.

Friday nights no longer need to spent inside; join in the fun at the free multi sports session at Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre from 7–9pm. Basketball, football, dodgeball and table tennis have been going down a treat with the young people for over a year now. They've also enjoyed Street Dance sessions and film making workshops with Film Oxford.

Sunday mornings have taken a skateboarding twist in Greater Leys, and girls and boys are now cruising along Frys Hill Skate Park showing off their skills.

Hosted by Oxford Wheels Project in partnership with Oxford City Council, the session runs from 11am–1pm every Sunday where experienced coaches take you through the basics of skateboarding up to intermediate and advanced tricks.

If you have a board, bring it along, if not drop the coaches an email lessons@owp.org.uk and you can borrow one on the day.

Your first two sessions are absolutely free and it's only £2.50 thereafter. So if you're aged between 14–17, wake up early and get down to Frys Hill Skate Park (behind the Kassam) for some awesome skateboarding fun.

These sessions are brought to you by Oxford City Council's Youth Ambition programme. There is no need to pre-book, but if you have any questions please contact the team on 01865 252729 or email sportsdevelopment@oxford.gov.uk.

Keep an eye out for more sessions in and around the Leys on the website www.oxford.gov.uk/communitysport and remember to like the Facebook page: Oxford Youth Ambition.

Volunteers needed for Leys charity

CONNECTION Floating Support is a local charity based in the Leys which supports vulnerable adults to maintain, or secure accommodation, and to live independently within the community.

This year the charity will be launching a new volunteer project throughout Oxfordshire. Initially the focus will be on recruiting Independent Living Mentors who will work with clients alongside Connection support workers assisting with a range of tasks such as planning and cooking meals, budgeting and taking to appointments.

■ If you can spare a few hours a week and would like to know more about this new project please contact Volunteer Co-ordinator, Angela Dormon on 01865 711267/07799 110037 or email angeladormon@connectiofs.org

New lunchtime drop-in club at the Clockhouse

OXFORDSHIRE Unlimited is a user led voluntary organisation run for and by people with physical and sensory disabilities and their carers.

A person without a disability has access to all that Oxfordshire has to offer with the aim to assist those with disabilities to have the same opportunities, access and social inclusion.

■ To find out more please contact the membership secretary on 01865 773840
email membership@oxfordshireunlimited.org
www.oxfordshireunlimited.org

Jobs at Mini Plant Oxford

MINI Plant Oxford has 31 places available in a variety of areas ranging from finance and logistics to engineering and IT. Technical apprentices will attend Plant Oxford's new bespoke training school, featuring state-of-the-art classrooms, dedicated computer study areas and a fully-equipped workshop.

■ For more information go to:
www.mini-production-triangle.com/people/apprenticeships.aspx

GREEN FINGERS

By Stuart Mabbutt

Link your gardens together

LAST week I was working in a garden when I saw over in the neighbouring garden the homeowner was digging up his entire 100 foot mixed native hedge. Doing this in autumn with all the berries and hibernation areas, you can imagine my horror.

Over a period of time, the garden in question has been cleared of all life and all that remains of a once abundant habitat is a lush lawn (void of weeds) surrounded by close board fencing.

When I leant over the fence and advised that autumn wasn't probably the most advisable season to do this with wildlife in mind, and that did he really need to clear the entire hedge line as diversity is the name of the game.

The response was "Oh I can't be bothered with gardening, I'm going to dig the lawn up too and put an artificial one down. Anyway the wildlife will look after itself, there are plenty of other gardens around."

Now, my take on this is that wildlife shouldn't have to adapt just because we decide to leave carnage in our garden. Many people are doing the same in their gardens, so where has the wildlife got left to go? Also what this gardener failed to realise was this was the last mixed hedge in his area, so he was totally removing the last resting place for wildlife that only uses native hedges.

Remember I said many insects are host specific. Just because they are in one type of hedge, doesn't mean they can quickly adapt to another type.

Lastly, wildlife uses hedges linking many gardens as navigation highways, linking communities together. When removing a hedge or a stand of trees, stand back and see if you are clearing a void in these highways that intersect your area.

You could be isolating a population of insects as they can't navigate around, which ultimately can cause local extinction if the clearance is on a large scale.

Next time you are gardening, tidying or clearing, look at the bigger picture and observe what it is you are actually doing.

Happy gardening.

Saturday 6th Sept 2014, 12-4pm
Blackbird Leys Park, Cuddesdon Way

LIVE OR WORK IN THE LEYS?
LIKE TO BE PART OF THE...

LEYS FESTIVAL 2014

(formerly the 'Leys Fair')

WE NEED YOU!

CAN YOU HELP TO ORGANISE IT? HELP TO FUND IT? GOT AN IDEA?

WANT TO BE INVOLVED? ANYTHING YOU WANT TO DO?

To get involved, call Oxfordshire Play Association (OPA) on: 01865 779474 or email: jane.gallagher@oxonplay.org.uk
www.oxonplay.org.uk

BLACKBIRD LEYS PARISH COUNCIL

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Local Leys Organisations

OPA OXFORDSHIRE PLAY ASSOCIATION

Thanks to the Blackbird Leys Parish Council for sponsoring this page

For Parish Council information please call 01865 716943 or go to www.leysonline.net

LEYS CDI

A VERY BIG THANK YOU!

FOR people on the Leys it was definitely a Christmas to remember thanks to the support of the Leys CDI. Volunteers made sure that nobody spent Christmas alone and organised a community Christmas dinner.

On Christmas Eve the food preparation took place and teams of young people prepared the hall later on that evening for the Christmas festivities that would take place the following day.

Marsha Jackson from the CDI said: "The Christmas Day dinner went very well and people steadily streamed through the door throughout the day and evening, some new and some regular faces.

"For those that were not able to come to the event due to mobility or health issues we provided a delivery service. Later on in the evening we took some food to the night shelter which was gratefully received."

One person who was part of the festivities said: "I had a lovely time it's nice to see that there are people who care."

The CDI would like to thank GreenSquare and Waitrose for funding the event and to all those who donated various items and a big thank you to all the volunteers whose help and support made this event a truly special day.

Agnes Smith Advice Centre

KEEP WARM THIS WINTER

IF YOU are a pensioner, disabled, vulnerable or on a low income there is help for you this winter.

■ The Winter Fuel Payment

The Winter Fuel Payment helps pensioners pay their gas and electricity bills in the winter, regardless of how cold the weather gets.

If you are a woman, you are entitled this year if you reached state pension age by 16 September 2013. If you are a man, you can claim a Winter Fuel Payment when you reach the state pension age of a woman with the same date of birth as you.

The Winter Fuel Payment this year is between £100 and £300, depending on your circumstances. Most people who qualify do not need to make a claim. It should be paid to you automatically if you receive state pension or certain other benefits.

If you are not getting any of the benefits and you have not received a Winter Fuel Payment before, you will have to make a claim, and make sure the form arrives by 31 March 2014.

You can request a claim form from the Winter Fuel Payments helpline on 0845 915 1515 or from the GOV.UK website.

■ Cold Weather Payments

Cold Weather Payments are made to people on a low income to help with extra heating during cold snaps. If the weather in your area is forecast or recorded at an average daily temperature of 0 degrees centigrade or less for seven consecutive days, a payment will be made. It should be paid automatically to people on a qualifying benefit, normally within 14 days.

If you think you should be entitled to a payment but do not receive one, check the GOV.UK website to see if the temperature in your area was cold enough and for long enough to trigger a payment. If you still don't receive payment, contact your pension centre or Jobcentre Plus to make a claim. The payment is £25 for each period of cold weather.

■ The Warm Home Discount Scheme

If you are on a low income, you may qualify for the Warm Home Discount Scheme. This gives a rebate to pensioners and others on low income. The main energy companies are required by law to offer the rebate. This winter the rebate is £135 off your electricity bill.

You will qualify if you are a pensioner on 20 July 2013, and you are either:

- Under 75 and only get the Guarantee Credit part of Pension Credit (not the Savings Credit)
- 75 or over and get the Guarantee Credit part of Pension Credit—even if you also get the Savings Credit part.

To find out if your energy supplier is taking part in the scheme check the GOV.UK website.

If you don't fall within the above category but you are on a low income, it will be up to your supplier to decide whether you can get the discount. The DWP should make sure you get the discount automatically. If you do not, or if you are on low income but not sure if you are eligible you will need to contact the supplier direct.

There is a Warm Home Discount Scheme helpline on 0845 603 9439, Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 4.30pm.

■ More Help

The Home Heat Helpline 0800 336699 (free phone) provides information on grants, payment schemes and benefits that may be available for vulnerable customers struggling to pay their bills.

Contact the Agnes Smith Advice Centre if you want further advice on keeping warm this winter.

BLNSS Ltd ASAC Advising the community

■ Agnes Smith Advice Centre, *96 Blackbird Leys Road, Blackbird Leys, OX4 6HS. Telephone: 01865 770206 Email: asac.reception@blackbirdleysnss.co.uk*

POLICE UPDATE

Police on the Leys still tackling ASB

POLICE on the Leys will continue to work to reduce Crime and anti social behaviour in the area this year, and will be consulting with residents regularly to establish where they feel they should focus their attention.

PCSO Barry Sheehan said: "We have been made aware of ASB issues in Celandine Place on Greater Leys. The issues reported include door bell ringing, stone throwing and intimidation.

"We will be working with the Community Response Team, Catalyst Housing and the Anti Social Behaviour Investigation Team from Oxford City Council, to look at identifying any offenders and ways to reduce the worries of the reporting parties of these incidents. We have increased our patrols in the area and will continue to do so.

"Residents have reported that there have been youths hanging around the stairwells in Strawberry Path. We have been patrolling there regularly and have moved on a couple of groups from the location. It seems that most of those that were loitering there were doing so to shelter from the bad weather but not aware of how their presence made the residents feel. We will continue to monitor the area and if identified persons keep returning we will look how we will deal with them and consider behaviour warnings. It is hoped that those that we have spoken to will think again about loitering in these stairwells and intimidating residents."

Parking

Residents in Briar Way have also complained about parking issues. Barry added: "Since then a lot of work has been carried out by our team, Oxford City Council and the Community Response Team to look at ways of resolving some of the tensions and concerns. A mediation meeting has been set up and we hope that this will be able to lessen the impact on residents."

Crime alerts

Receive free local crime alerts and crime prevention advice by registering at: www.thamesvalleyalert.co.uk today. This allows anyone who signs up to choose what updates they receive and how they would like to receive it.

An option includes receiving information via text but more traditional landline and email messages are still available. You can also filter the updates you receive by specifying the priority level of the messages you receive.

■ CONTACT INFO

If you want any advice or would like to contact the neighbourhood team you can call the police non emergency number 101 but if your call is an emergency then dial 999.

You can also contact the team via email: OxfordSouthEastNHPT@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk (*Please note this email address cannot be used to contact Thames Valley Police to report crimes or for any urgent matters.*)

If you have information about crime or anti social behaviour in your area but you do not want to speak to the police, please call the Crimestoppers charity on 0800 555111.

To view information on your neighbourhood team you can visit the force website at: www.thamesvalley.police.uk You can now follow the team on Twitter: https://twitter.com/TVP_Cowley you can read updates on work that is being done within the community.

Blackbird Leys Parish Council

Meeting Dates

■ Tuesday 25 February, 7.00pm
in the Jack Argent Room, BBL Community Centre

Parish Councillors

Gordon Roper (Chair), Ann Booker (Vice Chair), Brian Lester, Tanya Prescott, Chris Hatton, Cyril Martin, Sheila Smith and Pat Stannard.

For further details telephone (9am–5pm) 07754 271831
Mail to: Parish Council, c/o Nicky Clargo 181 Wroslyn Road, Freeland, Witney, Oxon OX29 8AL

For further details of Parish Council news, meetings, minutes and other activities in Blackbird Leys please go to the community website

www.leysonline.net

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CARNIVAL FUNDRAISING BEGINS

THE Cowley Road Works charity has started work to raise £110,000 to fund this year's carnival planned for Sunday, 6 July, and anyone who wants to get involved is urged to get in touch.

Following a successful event last year attended by an estimated 35,000 people, the proposal for 2014 is to close the Cowley Road to traffic from The Plain to the junction with Magdalen Road.

The event will take place from 11am to 6pm with the procession, music and other performances, stalls and family activities along the road and in surrounding spaces and venues. Once again, the aim is for a free, community-based event which celebrates the rich cultural mix of Oxford and appeals to people of all ages from across the city.

The charity is working towards a more environmentally friendly event, with better recycling of waste and continuing the unique tradition of a fossil-fuel free procession.

The charity relies on the goodwill of many and on volunteers helping in many different ways, both before and at the event. However, there are unavoidable costs in preparing for and putting on a free public event of this size, and a fundraising challenge is underway.

Oxford City Council is very supportive of the event and has pledged £30,000 towards it. Organisers want it to be bigger and better. However, despite the council's support, the event can only go ahead if the people and businesses of Oxford support, take part and help to fund it.

Cllr Steve Curran, Portfolio holder for Communities and Young People, Oxford City Council, said: "Oxford City Council is extremely proud to provide seed funding for this fantastic event. Despite the pressures that currently exist in public funding we are pleased to be able to support the people of Oxford and particularly East Oxford in enjoying a tremendous event which boosts community cohesion, community values, wonderful creativity, and of course tremendous fun. Last summer's event was quite remarkable with the Carnival returning to its rightful place on the Cowley Road. The organisers did a first rate job and 35,000 people cannot be wrong in celebrating the diversity, passion and creativity of our great city."

A series of fundraising events is planned in the lead up to the carnival, to raise essential funds, involve as many people as possible in the preparations for the event, and give a taste of the event in the lead up to July.

Currently planned fundraisers include an international football tournament, pub quizzes, a dinner, live music and film night, and a music gig.

Discussions are in progress with potential sponsors and more sponsors are needed. If you know a business which would be interested in sponsorship, please contact Danielle on info@cowleyroadworks.org

David Williams, Councillor for East Oxford, said: "The last carnival was a wonderful celebration of all that is best on the Cowley Road and East Oxford. Tens of thousands of people enjoyed a brilliant day of pure happiness with music, dance, food and entertainment. The carnival's dream of showing the benefits of our multicultural community blossomed in a rich and vivid showcase of colour and character. The carnival was a statement, expressed in joy and creativity, that we are proud of our local people and the vivid energy they bring to enrich the lives of us all. It was a day to remember. A day when all that was good came onto the streets of Cowley Road."

To keep informed on fundraising events and other carnival news please visit the carnival website at www.cowleyroadcarnival.co.uk, like the Cowley Road Carnival Facebook Page, or follow on Twitter @cowleycarnival.

Online donations can be made through The Big Give link on the website and text donate by texting CRNV14 £10 (or chosen amount) to 70070.

■ **If you are interested in performing, taking part in the procession or having a stall, please contact Alison on admin@cowleyroadworks.org or tel. 07941 482376 to register your interest.**

HELP VALE HOUSE

VALE House in Sandford on Thames is looking for volunteers to help raise awareness and funds for their organisation.

Vale House provides high quality care for people suffering from all types of dementia and provides support to their families and friends. Becoming a volunteer is a fantastic way of making new friends and having lots of fun as well as supporting Vale House.

Volunteers meet with the Fundraising Manager once a month to discuss ideas and different ways of fundraising. Vale House works together with families to provide comfort to those in their care, enabled by specialist trained staff. The organisation is committed to the ongoing development of specialist palliative care in the dementia field and provides managerial, psychological and emotional support for staff & families.

■ **If you would like to get involved or have some ideas on how to raise funds please contact Sandy Briscoe, Fundraising Manager for more information: Tel 01865 718467 Email: fundraising @valehouse.org.uk www.valehouse.org.uk**

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or email me on:
Sharon@shortbarkandsides-mobile.co.uk

PET HATES

BY ALAN WITTON

Do you wish it could be Christmas every day?

WELL, frankly, no I don't. Not if Christmas is going to involve, as it did for me this time, walking out of a very pleasant Leys News Christmas party (at which I had had nothing more intoxicating to drink than apple juice)—and, minutes later, spreadeagling myself on the footpath in Gillians Park, and having to be rescued by concerned neighbours, a First Response man, and not one not two but three ambulance personnel! Damage (apart from my ego, which is healing nicely already) included a substantial slice out of my nose and loss of what felt like pints of blood from there and my forehead. Not recommended for beginners, or indeed for anyone. I won't ask the Editor to put my current picture at the head of this piece. It isn't a pretty sight at all.

The good thing about this, if there is one, is that I was dealt with carefully, efficiently and above all compassionately by dozens of NHS staff at almost all levels of the service, and from, it seems, virtually all corners of the globe. The ambulance crew included a paramedic from South Africa, whom I upset (slightly) by telling her she sounded Australian!—two ward nurses who looked after me, one from Poland and one from Spain, did their jobs superbly well—and finally, after a rather restless night in the Emergency Assessment Unit, I had my nose expertly stitched by two doctors, one from China and the other, I think, from somewhere in the South Asian peninsula. Even the porter who wheeled me around the hospital hailed, I think, from somewhere several hundred miles further east than Lowestoft.

So the current Pet Hate is against the widely-held belief that we can, or even should, bar our country's doors against those who come from elsewhere. Without these so-called immigrants (an unlovely word, but we have yet to come up with a better one) the NHS, to name but one famous British institution, would grind to a halt in a matter of minutes. So would the railways; so would most bus companies. Indeed it was the desperate staff shortage in the NHS in its earliest days that persuaded a certain Minister of Health to advertise hospital jobs to citizens of then-current and former British colonies in the West Indies and elsewhere! His name was Enoch Powell. We all know what happened to him.

We British usually like to have our cake and eat it too. We insist, quite rightly, on a high standard of service in all departments of our public life. We also insist, less reasonably, that someone else can clean our hospital wards, look after our old people, drive our buses and trains, collect our rubbish, and do anything else that looks like dirty or hard work. Some of us, those who have taken leave of every last shred of reason, even think that when we are wheeled into hospital we are entitled to be treated only by people of our own ethnic heritage. Well, if I had made that last stipulation, I would still be lying on that footpath, and I would possibly have bled to death. And it would serve me right.

As a Briton, I am rightly proud of my country's history and heritage. And my pride is enhanced by knowing of the millions of people from all corners of the globe who aspire to come and live here too. Yes, I'm glad all of you want to come and share this great country with us. It is a wonderful place to live, with all its faults. That's why I've never been the least bit tempted to emigrate.

Of course you can't all come at once. We need to build more houses, schools—yes, and hospitals—to accommodate an ever-increasing population. But those who say Britain is "full up" are surely wide of the mark. Two other European countries, Belgium and the Netherlands, have population densities far and away in excess of ours. Neither of them, as far as I know, has ever completely put up the shutters against immigration. And one of them, at least, has earned a reputation for centuries as an asylum for those who are in danger in their home countries. Which is sadly more than we can claim in Britain. In 1916 we couldn't even protect Russia's Tsar Nicholas II, who was King George V's cousin, from being assassinated with all his family by the Bolsheviks.

So three cheers for those who want to declare Britain a welcoming destination for people from other corners of the globe. Many of us in the Leys, after all, either are such people, or are descended from them. And three resounding boos for those who want to argue for the contrary position.

THE VOICE OF YOUNG WOMEN

LEYS CDI Herstory is a poetry, spoken word and rap project funded by Arts Council for England.

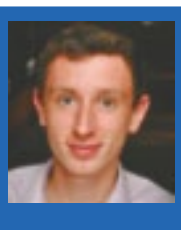
Herstory is a girls' and young women's project which researches the voices of famous women writers and poets, and discusses issues faced by young women in deprived areas today.

The project develops and shares young women's voices and stories. This is a research based project which will take place at Blackbird Leys Library and the Leys CDI every Monday and Saturday in January.

The young women will be developing this project with hip hop artist Amy True, and there will guest workshops from spoken word artist and poet Amerah Saleh, the voice of the poets, and rapper Justice.

Over the next month the young women will be looking at the art of poetry, spoken word and rap, and this will culminate in the collective delivering a performance, capturing the stories through the eyes of young women.

The performance will be held during the first week of February at Blackbird Leys Library. All participants will also have the opportunity to do an arts award on this project.



GROWING UP GRUMPY

By Ross Arrowsmith

Wrap up it's winter!

HAS anybody else noticed how cold it is recently? I swear I wake up in the morning, leave the house and everywhere is just blue. I feel like I've smoked a pack of twenty cigarettes just watching my breath waiting at the bus stop.

Most people my age figure that, as it's well into New Year and spring is on the horizon, we don't really need coats. How wrong was I! I walk across Bond Square and through Westgate every morning like my joints are made of clay. Wear a coat folks. You can't go wrong.

Saying that—stood in the sun, you do half expect it to warm you up, but it tends to do little other than give you temporary blindness. Walking through shadows is the worst—it's as if you've just walked into frozen over rapids at Alton Towers!

Then just to take the biscuit, the bus turns up late, even more so in the cold weather. It's like the heaters on the buses are off in the winter and on in the summer! The cold weather is a perfect excuse to stay indoors on the Xbox or with an endless supply of Aero bars.

Another thing I've noticed about people as well—some are either really hot, (their arms are like living radiators) and other people are like Christmas trees that haven't been chopped down yet. Sad to say, I'm one of those people that stand their shivering, my mouth chattering like a squad of Chinook helicopters landing nearby. But enough of the cold weather—the signs of spring are here!

The days are gradually beginning to get longer, which is great, because short days are rubbish for going outside, the nice yellow daffodils are picking up (even though that's just a nice stereotypical touch) and the sun can be seen more in the sky! Hang in there. It won't be long until summer now. That seems to be what the British do all year round—wait for summer and then in September realise it's already gone past in the form of miserable and rainy weather!

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Leys News

FREE workshops and open days at Leys News 2014

Are you looking for a new challenge for the New Year?

Leys News is always keen to hear from anyone who is interested in getting involved with our community newspapers, and in 2014 we will be organising a series of workshops and open days at our offices in Kingfisher Green.

The next session will be on Thursday 13 March and will run from 10am–1pm.

The workshop is open to everyone in the community who would like to know more about volunteering as a community journalist or photographer or anyone who is keen to find out more about business development and office management.

Refreshments and all materials will be provided.

To find out more and to register for the workshop please email editor@leysnews.co.uk
We look forward to seeing you!

mail@leysnews.co.uk | phone: 01865 711756

Gifts from the heart

By Sarah Edwards

LOVE it or loath it, there is no escaping the fact that St Valentine's Day is almost here. Coming so soon after Christmas and on such a huge commercial scale, it is easy to see why many people dread being confronted by the large swathes of tacky red cards and glitzy gifts that seem to have been in our shops since New Year's Day!

However, treating the one you love to something special does not have to cost a lot of money, and should not be limited to over priced cards, expensive bouquets and boxes of chocolates, let alone diamonds and expensive weekends away!

If you are planning to treat someone, or yourself, this year then think creatively about what you decide to buy, and if you are feeling crafty then make something instead. A gorgeous homemade cake, pie or even an entire meal is always a treat, especially if it is for someone who usually does the family catering (husband please note!).

Handmade cards are fun, personal and can be made really special by using photos and poems and years ago a good friend of mine painted a smooth pebble gold and then wrote a message on it in permanent marker for her husband. He still treasures it.

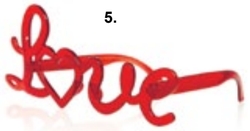
If you are keen to buy flowers then avoid predictable red roses, which always soar in price at this time of year. Instead choose bunches of spring flowers (a few pounds in Lidl) and tie with a piece of ribbon. So this year, don't break the bank or feel under pressure to buy in to the hype.

Showing you care shouldn't be a financial burden and it doesn't need to be. There are plenty of fun gifts available that are not expensive, and if you are going to invest some hard earned cash then think practical!

Whether you consider the ancient celebration to be simply a singletons awareness day, or you do actually buy in to the idea of treating your loved one to something special, we have put together a top ten of our favourite loved-up gifts for this year that are fun, different, useful and not too pricey.

1. Text Me Tweet Me socks: £3.50 from Accessorize
2. Heart bracelet: £2.99 from British Heart Foundation shops
3. Heart pencils: £3.00 from Cath Kidston
4. Rose bracelet: £6.00 from Cath Kidston
5. Love glasses: £2 from Primark
6. Lavender heart: £10 from Sainsbury's
7. Patchwork heart cushion: £9.95 www.dotcomgiftshop.com
8. Vintage sign: £5.95 from www.dotcomgiftshop.com
9. Heart hot water bottle: £14.95 from www.dotcomegiftshop.com

5.



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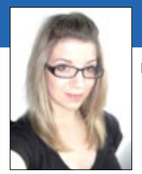
Fashion on the Leys

By Natalie Wallace



That's a wrap!

DESPITE having a jacket and coat or two in abundance, at this time of year I'm always on the prowl for yet another. The justification is two-fold: One, leaving the house without a coat will be a rare occurrence for the next few months and two, all the shops have amazing discounts on their winter stock meaning you can bag a brand new overcoat merely weeks into the beginning of the season, safe in the knowledge you still have time to get some wear out of it.

It's best to start the coat hunt around October or November when the new season stock arrives. Ear-mark your favourites and make a bee-line for those sale rails to try and find what you're looking for come January.

If you're stuck on what to choose, and who could blame you with the vast array of choice (unfortunately there is never just one 'coat of the moment'), here is my fool-proof guide to coats you should own. Just identify the gaps in your wardrobe and happy hunting!

1.

The formal coat
(For super smart occasions)
This coat will be super flattering and probably be of the luxurious wool variety. It may also be a fun faux-fur jacket (3) which would be great for making a simple jean and shirt outfit more edgy or a cocktail dress super glamorous. Military styles (2) also look very smart yet on trend. Raid the charity and vintage shops as these styles are often on the pricey side.

The smart casual coat
(Aka the coat for everyday)
This coat will probably be the most worn of all the coats and jackets you own. It should be practical and warm yet smart. This coat, if chosen wisely, should last your for years to come and never go out of style. The styles to look for are the classic parka, duffel or trench (1). Choose something neutral like beige, tan, chocolate brown or the very safe, black or navy blue. This teal one (6) from George at ASDA ticks all the boxes.

2.

The practical coat
(More commonly referred to as the dog-walking jacket)
All elements of style can be disregarded with this one. It should be warm, waterproof, probably have a hood and be protective against all the harsh winter elements (5). If you want to splash the cash on a coat, do it on a decent practical waterproof and you won't have to think twice about venturing out on a rainy Saturday again. Sport shops are a good place to start looking, as are camping, outdoor stores and garden centres.

4.

3.

5.

The trendy little jacket
This will be the perfect cool little jacket to pair with jeans. You'll probably finding yourself wearing this shopping, to the pub, coffee with friends, in fact any casual social occasion. Look for sheepskin lined suede, bomber style or leather biker jackets. Internacionale has a biker with a twist with this quilted version (4).

6.

CRAFT CORNER

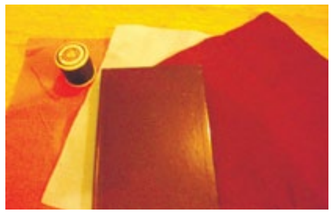
By Jane Yates

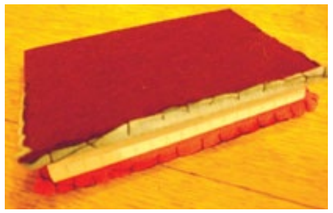
Valentine book

THIS is a small gift you can make as personal as you like. You will need:

- A small notebook (*try the Pound Shop as they have packs of four for £1*)
- Three pieces of felt (*60p a piece from The Broad Canvas Art Shop in Broad Street*)
- Needle and thread
- A button

1. Place book on felt and cut around to make the cover.
2. Then cut two different colour pieces of felt for the inner flaps.
3. Sew using blanket stitch, it can be untidy as we are going for the home made look.
4. Then cut out two small heart shapes and stitch though the middle and add the button. Then sew blanket stitch around the hearts to attach to the cover.
5. Slide the cover on.
6. Now you can either buy a nice pen and wrap up to give as a gift, or you can hand write something personal inside it, such as romantic poems, recipes or song lyrics.





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Leys Learning

SUCCESS FOR STUDENTS

THE Oxford Academy's first Academic Awards Evening celebrated the achievement of around 70 students from across the Academy.

The evening saw students receive awards for most improved, highest attainment and most outstanding across the three phases (Foundation, Accreditation and Sixth Form) and 14 different subjects.

There were three special subject awards presented to Year 11 students namely the Professor Marcus du Sautoy Award that went to Cian McCormack for his excellence in Maths, the Beecroft Physics Award received by Rumbi Humba and the Baroness Warnock History Award presented to Amber Giles.

On receiving her award, Amber said: "This is a real achievement for me as I like history—hard work pays off!"

Inspirational speakers at Ruskin College

UNTIL March, Ruskin College has a series of free events planned as an introduction to contemporary theatre.

Four inspirational speakers Maxine Peake, Mark Haddon, David Edgar and Owen Shears will talk about theatre, and there will also be four rehearsed readings by some of Oxford's own professional and student actors including A Taste Of Honey by Shelagh Delaney and Top Girls by Caryl Churchill.

All events will take place in Ruskin College's new site in Old Headington, Oxford. John Retallack recently appointed tutor on the Writing for Performance course, first thought of Ruskin Theatre Platforms in order that his own students could meet modern playwrights at first hand. He quickly realised that it was an ideal opportunity to bring in students and theatre-goers from all over Oxford and introduce them to Ruskin College's new Theatre Studio.

John said: 'We hope Ruskin Theatre Platforms will be one of a series of events this year that will open up this stunning new college and its grounds to everyone in Oxford, because if there is one thing that Ruskin College is about, it's access to all. These events are free and open to everyone whether you go to a local school, are unemployed, a student at the University of the Third Age or study Classics at Balliol. Even the café here is open to the public throughout the year—how many colleges in Oxford will let you drop in for a meal or a coffee at any time of the day?"

He added: "The venue is a purpose built space with room for 150 to watch and listen to a play or a speaker—yet small enough to allow interaction with an audience too. The college has only been here for one year, after a century on Walton Street and, at the moment, it's the best-kept secret in Oxford. However, anyone lucky enough to know about our new home leaves with a sense of wonder at the architecture and extraordinary view of the countryside that the college enjoys—yet it is ten minutes from the centre of Oxford City."

■ **All events are Free but tickets must be booked in advance from ruskinplatforms@ruskin.ac.uk**

Programme of events at Ruskin

Wednesday 29 January, 6.30pm
Rehearsed reading: A Taste Of Honey by Shelagh Delaney.

Wednesday 5 February, 6.30pm
Rehearsed reading: Top Girls by Caryl Churchill (1982). 6.30pm.

Tuesday 11 February, 6.30pm
Speaker: Owen Sheers. Award-winning poet and script-writer; his work includes libretto and plays, notably the 72 hour The Passion (National Theatre of Wales) in Port Talbot, which starred Michael Sheen and was seen by 12,000 people. 6.30pm.

Wednesday 12 February, 6.30pm
Rehearsed reading: Shopping And F**King by Mark Ravenhill.

Wednesday 26 February, 6.30pm
Speaker: Mark Haddon. Best known for his novel The Curious Incident Of The Dog In The Night-Time, latterly staged by the National Theatre, Haddon has also written extensively for radio and television winning several Baftas and other awards.

Wednesday 5 March, 6.30pm
Speaker: Maxine Peake. Award-winning actress and playwright whose appearances on screen include Shameless, Silk and See No Evil: The Moors Murders; her stage appearances include the critically acclaimed title role in Miss Julie for Manchester Royal Exchange.

Wednesday 12 March, 6.30pm
Love Love Love by Mike Bartlett.

Wednesday 19 March
Speaker: David Edgar. Leading British playwright whose work includes Albert Speer (NT), Black Tulips (Tricycle), Destiny (RSC & West End), Nicholas Nickleby (RSC & West End) and Playing With Fire (NT).

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ANYONE FOR TENNIS?

IN PARTNERSHIP with Oxford County Council, Premier Tennis wants to transform tennis across Oxford's public courts. Cardio tennis, mini tennis, group coaching and casual matches are all coming to a park near you! Take a look at www.tennisoxford.com and see what's on offer.

The goal is to open tennis up to the local community and encourage everyone to try their hand at one of Britain's top sports. Taking away membership fees and charging as little as £3.50 for a session overseen by a qualified coach, the aim is to remove the barriers that sometimes stop people from getting involved.

James Auckland, Tennis Director at Premier Tennis and former doubles partner with Andy Murray, said: "We've found that high fees and the difficulty of finding places to play and people to play with often stop people from discovering tennis for themselves.

"Working with Oxford City Council provides a fantastic chance to meet the community in the middle and show them how it's a sport anybody can learn and love."

One of Premier Tennis' most exciting ideas are 'Organised Play' sessions, where anyone can come and find a casual and friendly match, overseen by a qualified coach. Another way to get involved is Cardio tennis; an increasingly popular new fitness class designed in consultation with the Lawn Tennis Association, offering vigorous music-led exercises based on fitness routines and movements from the game. With no tennis skills required at all, it's a good way to get comfortable with a racket and build match fitness—and by the end of a course participants are often surprised to see what they have learned.

Councillor Mark Lygo, Board Member for Parks, Sport and Events, said: "Premier Tennis' coaching credentials are very impressive, but we are especially glad that they share our passion for involving the whole community in opportunities to get active.

"We hope everyone is inspired to give tennis a go over the next few months, and will be glad to see the courts at Hinksey, Bury Knowle and Florence Park being well used."

Dave Reeve, Tennis Development Manager for the Lawn Tennis Association, added: "What Premier Tennis and Oxford City Council are doing is fantastic, and exactly what we would love to see happening all around the UK.

"Over the years we've seen families, young people, senior players and those from all walks of life embrace tennis to discover a rewarding game and a friendly community, and our aim is to show more and more people what it can offer them."

Joe Cartledge, Programme Lead for Oxford Parks at Premier Tennis and county player, hopes these new tennis opportunities will help kick start Oxford's tennis community: "It's a privilege to work with the Council to show the city how they can get involved in tennis, and we're looking forward to discovering a number of new, talented players right on our doorstep."

■ **The new tennis sessions will run on various days each week at Hinksey Park, Florence Park and Bury Knowle Park until the second week of April, and can be booked online at www.tennisoxford.com.**

Image by Tonny Watanebe (www.publicdomainpictures.net)

Kids' colouring competition

WE ARE looking forward to seeing your amazing artwork. The prize for the two best entries is a Transformers 87 Piece Art Set!

Send your entries to:
Kids' Colouring Competition, Leys News, 26, Kingfisher Green, Greater Leys, Oxford OX4 7BX

The most creative entry we receive by 15 February wins!

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Age: .....

Name of parent or guardian:

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Magical love story is a Valentine treat

OXFORD audiences will have the chance to enjoy a Valentine's Day treat, thanks to the Lunabug Theatre company.

The Dreams of Philomina will be performed at Pegasus on 15 February, and is a perfect Valentine treat for all ages.

The show tells the timeless love story of Philomina and her journey in search of her beloved husband Albert. One magical night Philomina is given the chance to see her love one last time.

Her adventure takes her from her seaside home to a wondrous land where she must reach a train station before Albert leaves. If she is to find him in time she will have to be braver than she has ever been before.

Lunabug creates a beautiful blend of visual imagery and original sound design, which is all combined with their own playful brand of physical storytelling in a charming, moving and heart-warming tale with plenty of silliness for all the family.

The Dreams of Philomina is created and performed by two young performers, co-artistic directors Naomi Rothwell and Beth Caudle.

After winning awards for her first show Lost In The Wind, Naomi first had the idea for The Dreams of Philomina whilst living in Spain. Once back in the UK, Naomi teamed up with Oxford based circus performer, musician and actor Beth Caudle and developed the show, which has successfully toured over the last two years.

■ **The Dreams of Philomina**
At Pegasus, Magdalen Road, Oxford OX4 1RE
Saturday 15 February, 3pm
(*Pre-show Puppetry and Storytelling workshop 2pm*)

Show tickets: £8 adult, £6 child
Show and Workshop Package: (*one adult and one child*) £16
Box Office: 01865 812150
(*Tue–Fri 12noon–6pm, Sat 10am–6pm*)

www.pegasustheatre.org.uk/shows/the-dreams-of-philomina

The making of an audio book

Katie—a worker at the Mill who read the book.

BECAUSE of her involvement with Leys News, and regularly contributing articles and ideas, Jane Yates decided to challenge herself even further and wrote a book, the Paradox Child. Not content with writing one, she tackled another and is now creating an audio book. Here is her story so far...

"Because I had some help with editing from Katie Debertrand I was able to get a second book published.

"Now Katie is helping me with a further challenge by narrating and producing an audio book of Paradox Child, made in The Mill on Cowley Road, with all profits going towards new recording equipment for its music room.

We were both excited as she sat down to read the very first sentence. She started by quoting Mary Poppins; 'Well began is half done,' she said in her crisp English voice. From which we both giggled.

"However she realised that it did not record. Panic ensued as she fiddled with all of the settings with no luck.

"In the end we phoned Andy who is in charge of the music room, who kindly helped us on his day off. This worked and after an hour in, Katie got comfortable and was about to read the first line, but stopped.

"'What's that?' we both said, it was the cleaner with a large Henry vacuum cleaner out in the hall and trying to get in the room to clean it.

"A much needed break and ten minutes later, Kate was ready again. It was not smooth sailing at first as Katie could not find the undo button. Plus there was a flood of visitors for an event at The Mill as well as a regular group that met there that day.

"But even with the doors slamming and people staring in though the small glass window at us, Katie took it all in her stride, her voice was warm and full of character and I felt she brought the book to life.

"I could visualise the logs crackling on the fire, see the ducks bobbing on the water and taste the Halloween candy. Fabulous and that was only the first two chapters! I will keep you posted how it goes."

Hero pigeon in new show for families

PEGASUS supported company Lunabug Theatre take an unusual look at one of the most famous and surprising heroes of the first world war in Pigeon on February 14 in a brand new family show.

This is the story of Cher Ami, a bird that flew behind enemy lines carrying vital messages.

He was one of 600 pigeons donated by the Pigeon Fanciers of Great Britain. Trained and used by American forces in the last year of the war, Cher Ami was kept by the 77th Infantry Division (The Lost Battalion) who in October 1918 were trapped and surrounded by enemy soldiers. By the end of the first day many had been wounded or killed by enemy and friendly fire. The first two pigeons sent out to alert commanders to their situation were shot down. Cher Ami, their last, rose into the air as enemy rifles opened fire. The pigeon fell but at the last moment spread his wings and flew 25 miles in as many minutes. He arrived blinded in one eye with a wound to his chest and the all important message canister clipped to a partially severed leg. His heroic efforts saved 200 infantrymen. He survived and was awarded the Croix de Guerre for his astonishing flight.

This two-hander production tells the amazing story using puppetry, live music, and delightfully daft characters with heart-warming charm. The show is still under development and audiences will have the chance to talk with the performers afterwards giving feedback and helping to polish the final piece before it tours around the UK.

■ **First Stage: Pigeon**
At Pegasus, Magdalen Road, Oxford, OX4 1RE
On Friday 14 February
4.30pm

Tickets £3
(*family ticket for four—max two adults: £10*)
Box Office: 01865 812150
(*Tue–Fri 12–6pm, Sat 10am–6pm*)

www.pegasustheatre.org.uk/shows/first-stage-pigeon

Fusion shares at symposium

FUSION Arts has recently finished a three-year programme of work with primary school children aged 8–11 called Story Makers and now want to share their learning.

Funded by Children In Need, the project, led by Arts Psychotherapist Helen Edwards, has worked with 90 children, in four Oxford based schools, and partnered with three museums: The Ashmolean, Pitt Rivers, and The Museum of History of Science. Children have taken part in creative activities on a theme each year, following visits to each of the museums, to create a world of stories, and help them overcome barriers to communication.

Fusion Arts would like to invite anyone interested in learning about partnership work on creative project for children experiencing challenging circumstances that have an impact on their speech, language and communication, to join them on Wednesday 12 February, 2–4pm, at Fusion Arts.

■ **For more information contact Lizzy on 01865 245735. lizzy@fusion-arts.org**

Art Club at Magdalen Road Studios
Every Monday 4–5.30pm. For ages 7–11 years.
Magdalen Road Studios, 74 Magdalen Road, (entrance by Pegasus Theatre), Oxford OX4 1RE
www.catandbird.info
For details call: 07990 835557
No need to book!

Friday Life Drawing
6.30–9pm at Fusion, East Oxford Community Centre, Princes Street, Oxford, OX4 1DD.
Untutored Life Drawing Class. Easels provided, but please bring your own drawing / painting instruments and paper. £3 per person. No need to book. Just turn up!

WHAT'S ON in the Leys

A quick guide to what's available locally. If you have a service or event you'd like to include, please ring 01865 711756

ADVICE

■ **Agnes Smith Advice Centre**
96 Blackbird Leys Rd. Gives free independent and impartial debt advice and counselling.
Drop-in sessions: Mondays 2.00–4.00pm and Fridays 10.00am–12.00pm.
Also in the Farmhouse, Tues and Thurs, 10am–12pm.
☎ 01865 770206

Leys Job club
Free one to one support for unemployed job seekers (you don't need to be receiving benefits). Help offered with CV, application forms, advice about courses, apprenticeships and volunteering. Also free workshops in Food Safety, first aid, IT, English, Maths and ESOL.
☎ Judith, 07769 235 395
Leysjobclub@gmail.com

CHILDREN

BLAP: Afterschool club
Outdoor and indoor activities for yrs 8–13 in a structured environment. 3.00–5.30pm.
£1 per session (5 sessions £4)
☎ 07530933690
and 01865 236646
blap76@yahoo.co.uk

■ **New Baby Group Inc. Breastfeeding Café**
Wednesdays, 1pm–2.30pm at Leys Children's Centre, Cuddesdon Corner.
☎ Contact Mikko Enticknap for Baby Group and Camille Kalaja for Breastfeeding Café
01865 773263

■ **Blackbird Leys Youth Centre**
Blackbird Leys Road. Variety of activities and advice for young people. ☎ 01865 772886.

■ **Maluchy group**
for Polish speaking families with children ages 0 to 5 years.
Saturday, 10.00am–11.30am, at Pegasus School.
☎ Agata, 07874 187 704

■ **Brownies:**
Holy Family Church Hall.
☎ Jennifer Pleass 07886 757338
bblbrownies@gmail.com

■ **35th Oxford Scout Group**
☎ Duncan Bowler,
0776 6293353
duncan@35thoxford.com

■ **Leys Kiddie Club**
Thursdays, 9.30am–2.30pm, at Dovecote Family Drop-in Room. £1.

Rainbows
For girls aged 5 to 7.
Fridays during term time, 5.30–6.30pm, at the Holy Family Church Hall on Cuddesdon Way.
☎Alexandra, 07804 500313

Dovecote Afterschool Club
Tuesdays–Thursdays, 3.15–5.00pm, £1.30 per session.
☎ 01865 712299 & 07974234661

■ **Oxfordshire (The Rifles) Battalion Army Cadet Force**
Thursdays, 7.30–9.30pm at Sandy Lane West. Boys and girls ages 13 to 18.
☎ 01869 259681

■ **Mother and Toddler Bounce**
Trampoline Sessions suitable for mothers and toddlers held on Thursdays, 10.30–11.30am. Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre.
☎ Fiona, 07891 419793

■ **Strawbery Fayre Majorettes**
Training every Wednesday at the Barn in Nightingale Avenue, Greater Leys, 7.00–9.15pm.
☎ Eleen Filer 01865 717781

■ **Tiny Tots Majorettes**
(for ages 4–7yrs) At the Barn in Nightingale Avenue, Wednesdays, from 6–6.45pm. £3.
New members welcome.
☎ Eleen Filer 01865 717781

■ **Teenage Rounders Class**
Tuesdays, 4.00–5.00pm
£1.20. For 14–18 year olds
Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre

EDUCATION

■ **Able Centre**
Cuddesdon Way. Free courses in Maths and English.
☎ Nicky, 01865 728688

■ **Blitz IT Courses**
IT for beginners, internet, email, file management, PC maintenance and more.
☎ 01865 714492

Blackbird Leys Library
Cuddesdon Way.
Books, DVDs, audio books, use of computers for adults and children, photocopying etc.
Opening times:
Mon, Wed, Thur: 9am–12pm and 1.30–5pm
Tue: 9am–12pm
Sat: 9.30am–12.30pm
Friday Closed
☎ 01865 770403

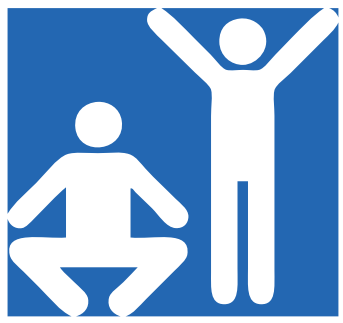
LEISURE

■ **Irish dancing.**
Sacred Heart Hall. Weds and Thurs, 5pm.

■ **Boxing Club.**
Tues and Thurs 7.30–9.00pm, at Youth Centre, Blackbird Leys Rd.
☎ Tony Gibson, 01865 432995

■ **The Oxford Community Choir.** All welcome.
☎ Hannah, 07512 364367
hannahsings@gmail.com

Blackbird Leys Swimming Pool
Blackbird Leys Road.
General swimming times are:
Mon & Fri, 5.45–6.45pm;
Sat & Sun, 11.15am–1.00pm, & 1.30–2.30pm
Prime Time for over 50s:
Mon, 12–1.00pm;
Wed, 11.30–12.30pm
Water Workout:
Tue and Fri, 12–1.00pm
Slimming World
Thurs, 12–1.00pm
☎ 01865 467040



BBL Leisure Centre
Zumba:
Mondays, 10.30–11.30am
Body Balance:
Tuesdays, 11.00–12.00pm
Legs, Bums, Tums:
Wednesdays, 10.15–11.15am
Body Pump:
Thursdays, 9.30–10.30am
Pilates:
Thursdays, 10.30–11.30am
Boxercise:
Fridays, 10.30–11.30am
Overs 50s indoor cycling:
Mondays, 11.30–12.15pm
☎ 01865 467020

Blackbird Leys Bowls Club
Cuddesdon Way
The Club is looking for new members. Open night every Thursday from 6.00pm
For further details contact:
☎ David Buckwell, 01865 881735 or Gordon Roper, 01865 361047

OLDER PEOPLE

■ **Prime Time Over 50s group**
Wednesdays, 10.30am-3.30pm, at Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre, Pegasus Road (£1.50). Keep fit, bingo, indoor bowls, speakers, activities and trips.
☎ 07534 740589

■ **Golden Circle**
☎ Mrs S Williams, 01865 770626 and 07748 999522

■ **Silver Circle**
☎ 435954 (Blackbird Leys Community Centre)

■ **Monday & Friday Lunch Club**
Frys Court, 2 Nightingale Avenue OX4 7WJ.
☎ Anne Appleton, 422231

■ **Leys Community Church Over 60s Club**
Wednesday afternoons.
☎ Keith Templar, 715815

■ **Grandparents' Stay & Play**
Bring your grandchildren to the Leys Childrens Centre drop-in, specially for grandparents. Weds 1–3 pm at the Dovecote.

The Clockhouse
see box on opposite page

CLASSIFIEDS

Reach new customers in your local area with a Leys News Classified ad. Advertise your business from as little as £10 per issue (when booking for 12 months). To book your space ring John on 01865 711756

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☎ Marilyn on 01865 308067 or 07990 630332

CARERS

Acquire Care
Oxford Science Park, OX4 4GP
Tel: 01865 338050

CHILDMINDING

Arar Childminding
ararchildminding@gmail.com
☎ 07417 439520

GARSINGTON BABY AND TODDLER GROUP
Needs new children to come and join the fun!
Wednesdays 9.30–11.30am(term time only)
@ Garsington sports &social club(on Denton Lane)
£1.50per family(includes drinks and snacks)
Everyone is welcome
☎ Jess 07930957654

OTHER

Writing, editing & proofing
Experienced freelance writer and editor offers professional, confidential and reliable service for writing, editing, and proof-reading.CVs, formal letters, thesis, manuscripts, brochures, invitations, etc.
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Contact Leys News office.
Tel. 01865 711756.

FAST/TAKEAWAY FOOD

Chillies Indian Cuisine
Dunnock Way, OX4 7EX
☎ 01865 775849

Dominos Pizza
57 Between Towns Rd, OX4 3LR
☎ 01865 777137

Papa John's Pizza
80 Rose Hill, Oxford, OX4 4HS
☎ 01865 402050

Pizza Hut
3 Courtlands Rd, Rose Hill, OX4 4HS
☎ 01865 236116

Pizza Polo
34 Cowley Rd, Littlemore OX4 4LD
☎ 01865 425630

FLORISTS

Joe Austin
174 Cowley Road, OX4 6NQ
☎ 01865 792037

GARDENS

The Garden
99–100 The Market, OX1 3YD
☎ 01865 240709

Acorn Nursery
Stadhampton, Oxford
☎ 01865 891663

Oxford Garden Centres
South Hinksey, OX1 5AR
☎ 01865 326066

Pathway Workshop
Dunnock Way, OX4 7EF
☎ 01865 714111

Wyevale Garden Centre
Suthern-By-Pass, Oxford
☎ 01865 326066

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& 07501 787 123

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phyllidachappell@yahoo.com
www.holistictherapistoxford.co.uk

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24 Vicarage Close, OX4 2NH
☎ 01865 434040

Oxford Cars
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☎ 01865 406070

WINDOW CLEANERS

MRF
37 Green Hill, OX4 7UD
☎ 01865 777889

Taylors Windows
Greater Leys
☎ 01865 773486

WELLBEING

■ **Skiptrix Fitness Class**
Get fit, tone and lose weight. Thursdays, 6.30–7.15pm at the Ark T Centre, Cowley. Satudays, 10–10.45am at the Barn, BBLeys. £4.00 per class.
☎ Trish, 07957754355
trishwisdom@yahoo.co.uk

■ **Yoga For All**
Experienced Yoga teacher.
☎ Linda Highland, 01865 432570

■ **ZUMBA Fitness Party**
Tues, 6.30–7.30pm at The Oxford Academy School, Sandy Lane West.
☎ 07714 248177
zumbasarahoxford@gmail.com
www.zumbasarahoxford.com

The Listening Centre
Counselling service based at Cuddesdon Corner Family Centre.
☎ 01865 794794

■ **Survivors**
Fridays and Saturdays, Blackbird Leys Community Centre. 9.30am–3.00pm. A self-help group of people who use or have used Mental Health Services, working together to get support for, to share experiences. Lunch available for £1.
☎ 07729 581975

■ **Oxfordshire Mind**
Short courses, groups and other support are available for anyone with a mental health problem. To find out more drop in to the Cowley Wellbeing Centre in St James' Hall, 26 Between Towns Road.
☎ 01865 247788

■ **Tai Chi & Qigong**
Class every Thursday morning 9.45–10.45am. Ark T Centre, Crowell Road, Cowley.
£5 & £6. First class half price.
☎ 07974185554

■ **Rosewood Club for people with dementia**
Open weekdays, 9.30am–3pm. Providing a stimulating, enjoyable and social day while your family carer gets a well-earned break. £11 per day all inclusive, plus a transport charge if used.
☎ Graham Hooper, 01865 749349
www.daybreak-oxford.org.uk

NOTICES

Socialist Party Meeting
Last Tuesday of every month at Leys Links Centre,Blackbird Leys Road. Starts 7.30pm
☎ 0208 9888777

The Leys WI
Meets the first Wednesday of each month, 7.30pm to 9.30pm, at The Clockhouse.
☎ Sue 07786158229
E: theleyswi@yahoo.co.uk

Leys Community Market
Freshly grown and home produced goods…from local veg, chutneys, cheeses and bread, to jewellery, perfumes, hand crafted gifts and more. Enjoy a tasty lunch/brunch in the café.
Next date at the Barn, Nightingale Avenue:
Saturday 22 February 11am–2pm
leyscommunitymarket@yahoo.com

LOCAL CHURCHES

■ **Redeem Christian Church of God**
Meets at the Leisure Centre, Pegasus Road.
Sunday Service: 3–6.00pm
Bible study on Fridays: 7–8pm, except last Friday of month.
☎ 07825 679044 and 01865 766056
www.RCCGLighthouse.co.uk

■ **Leys Community Church**
Meets on Sunday, 11am at the Oxford Academy, Beecroft Room (*includes special activities for children and young people*).
☎ Chipper and Anna Betts, 07985 982804

■ **Chrisco Ministries**
Meets at Jack Agent Room at the BBL Community Centre, Sundays, 11am–2pm
☎ 07533 845714 and 07737 564677

■ **Sacred Heart Catholic Church**
Balfour Road, Blackbird Leys
Sunday Masses: 9.30am, with music and children's liturgy; and at 6pm.
☎ 01865 776903

■ **Church of the Holy Family**
Eucharist: Each Sunday, 10am, with children's activities.
Timeout: Reflective worship. Most Sundays, 6.30pm.
Church Office Hour: Mondays (except bank holidays) at 6.30–7.30pm. For enquiries, hall bookings, wedding arrangements.
☎ Revd Heather Carter, 01865 778728 and Rev Adam Stevenson, 01865 714163
www.holyfamilybbl.co.uk

Photo: Jo Stannard

■ **Christian Harvest Ministries**
Meets at the Jack Argent Room at BBL Community Centre, Sundays, 3–5.30pm
☎ Rev Alice Kinyanjui, 01865 701129

Seventh Day Adventist Church
1A Chester St, off Iffley Road, Oxford OX4 1SL.
Saturday first service: 9.45–11am. Second service: 11.15am–12.30pm. Bible quiz plus free bible.
www.freebible.org.uk

Mount Zion Ministries Oxford
Glow Hall, Blackbird Leys Community Centre
Sunday Service: 11am–1.30pm.
All night prayers: every Friday 7–9pm
Bible Study: 11am–12pm every Sunday.
Rev Chris Ugwu, 07877 536406, 07932 964056 & 07877 054600
Email: mtzionoxford@yahoo.co.uk
www.mtzionox.org

The Clockhouse Community Centre

Long Ground, Greater Leys, OX4 7FX (*look for the clocks on the roof*)
☎ 01865 395908 **E:** clockhousecdi@btconnect.com

Our sessions are either low-cost or free, and all Leys over 50s are very welcome!

Welcome event—tea and cakes
New to the Leys CDI Clockhouse Project? Or not been for a while? Meet others and find out more, at these FREE, friendly socials. Our community project is for everyone aged 50 and over, living on the Leys. We run lots of great, low-cost activities. Please tel: 395908 for date/details of next Welcome Tea.

■ **Over 50s advice**
FREE monthly, confidential, advice on benefits, debt, housing and consumer issues. Outreach session at the Clockhouse, by Agnes Smith Advice Centre. To book an appointment please tel: 01865 395908.
Next dates: Monday 24 February, 10am–12.30pm (12–12.30pm is 'drop-in' —no appointment needed for this slot.)

■ **Games club for over 50s**
Enjoy playing dominoes, scrabble or a wide choice of other games, with this friendly and sociable group. Meets Monday afternoons throughout February (except 10 February). 1.30–3.30pm. £1.

■ **Dancing for over 50s**
Monthly dances. Next one: Monday 10 February—Line Dancing style, 1.30–3 pm. £2.

■ **City Council—Councillors' Surgery**
Monthly drop-in session to meet city councillors and discuss any concerns. No appointment needed. First monday of the month (except Bank Holidays) at the Clockhouse, 6.30–7.30 pm.

■ **Yoga for over 50s**
Seated/standing exercise, and relaxation. Beginners very welcome. Why not come and give this friendly group a try? Every Tuesday in February, 10–11am. £2

■ **Gardening club**
Monthly meeting of SLIGO (Senior Leys Independent Gardening Organisation). £2 per meeting. Adults of all ages very welcome. ***Next meeting:*** Thursday 6 February, 2–4pm.

■ **Singing for fun for over 50s**
Think you can't sing?—we bet you can! No pressure, or reading music, just relax and enjoy singing in good company. Aimed primarily at people living in and near the Leys. Every Tuesday in February 1.30–3.30pm (except 18 February). FREE. For details call 395908.

■ **Crafts group for over 50s**
Brighten up your week in good company with others who enjoy handcrafts. Bring your own knitting, crochet, or sewing. £1. Every Wednesday, 11am–12.30pm.

■ **Creative writing for over 50s**
Get creative and express yourself in a friendly, supportive group. No experience needed. Next session: Wednesday 12 February, 1.30–3 pm. £2.

■ **Tai chi for over 50s**
Seated and standing exercise to help you get more supple, and boost your energy. Every Thursday in February, 10–11am. £2.

■ **Computer courses for over-50s**
Learn at your own pace. Complete beginners very welcome. Improve your digital photography skills, or how to make DVDs and calendars. £1 per session. You need to book a place. For more info call 07951149724, or 07962 887379.

■ **Evening activities group**
Join the CLANGers (Clockhouse Activity Nights Group) at our friendly evening socials. Meet others, relax, chat, and make new friends. Adults of all ages welcome! £2 includes tea/coffee/biscuits. ***Next meeting:*** QUIZ NIGHT on Wednesday 26 February, 7–9pm. For details call: 395908

■ **Recycled jewellery-making**
We hope to run more sessions during 2014. For details contact Sally, 395908.

■ **Community Gardening**
Adult volunteers of any age are needed and welcome, to help keep the Clockhouse courtyard garden looking beautiful. Enjoy fresh air and good company while doing something positive for your local community. Regular work parties held. For details call: 395908.

■ **Watercolour painting group**
Both beginners and more experienced painters very welcome. No formal tuition but others will help you get started! Thursdays, 2–4 pm at Potters Court (Robin Place, Greater Leys.) £2. Tel: 395908

■ **Oxfordshire Unlimited (OU) Coffee Morning**
Thursday 27 February 12 noon to 2 pm. OU supports and empowers people with disabilities. Come and find out more! FREE. All welcome.

YOUR LOCAL REPRESENTATIVES

Parish Council

Chairman: Gordon Roper. **Vice Chair:** Mrs Ann Booker. **Non-position holders:** Tanya Prescott, Chris Hatton, Brian Lester, Cyril Martin, Mrs Sheila Smith, Pat Stannard

For further details telephone 01865 716943 during office hours of 9am–5pm, Monday to Friday. Send mail to Parish Council, 13 Bailey Road, Oxford, OX4 3HU.

Also check leysonline.net to find out about Parish Council Meetings.

Oxford City Council

Blackbird Leys Ward

■ **Val Smith** —*Labour*
4 Flaxfield Road, OX4 6QD
☎ 07767 446051
or cllrvsmith@oxford.gov.uk

■ **Rae Humberstone** —*Labour*
75 Little Bury, Blackbird Leys.
☎ 01865 779678
cllrhumberstone@oxford.gov.uks

Val Smith and Rae Humberstone will be doing street surgeries every other week. They can also visit people in their homes—ring or email to make arrangements.

Northfield Brook Ward

■ **Steve Curran** —*Labour*
88 Fairacres Road, Oxford, OX4 1TG
☎ 07941 785538
StephenCurran55@yahoo.co.uk

■ **Scott Seamons** —*Labour*
Flat 14, 113 Oxford Rd, OX4 2GY
☎ 07910 595047
cllrsseamons@oxford.gov.uk

Steve Curren and Scott Seamons have a surgery at 6.30pm on the first Monday of the month at the Clockhouse.

Oxfordshire County Council

Leys Division

■ **Val Smith** —*Labour*
4 Flaxfield Road, OX4 6QD
☎ 07767 446051
val.smith@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Member of Parliament

■ **Andrew Smith** —*Labour*
Unit A, Bishops Mews, Transport Way, Oxford
☎ 01865 595790
andrewsmith.mp@virgin.net

Surgery: Every third Friday at the Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre from 3.00pm

Keep warm this winter and help local wildlife

LOCAL people will be able to take old wood that has been felled as part of an ongoing programme of woodland management across the city, to use in their log burners and open fires.

The wood is being offered through a partnership with Oxford City Council and Logs4Labour through the Oxford Woodfuel Programme.

On Saturday 8 February you will be able to go to Mary Sadler's Field in Shotover Country Park, where birch, felled as part of our heathland restoration can be cut and taken away by volunteers. Also seasoned oak logs can be purchased from West Hill Farm, in Shotover Country Park on Thursday 13 February.

Councillor Mark Lygo, Board Member for Parks, Sports and Event, said: "The logs are taken from trees that have been felled to allow for other smaller species of trees and flora and fauna to flourish in areas where they have become shaded. By taking away the wood our residents are helping to save their local wildlife."

Volunteers should wear suitable clothing, wear sturdy boots and gloves and bring loppers and handsaws.

■ **To find out more visit www.facebook.com/oxonwood and www.facebook.com/parksoxford or visit www.oxford.gov.uk/parks or call 01865 252240.**

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Kidlington OX5 1EE
Tel: 01865 378888

1 Courtland Road
Rosehill
Oxford OX4 4HZ
Tel: 01865 772780

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Leys Sport

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STUDENTS BOWLED OVER BY CRICKET LEGEND

THE OXFORD Academy was delighted to welcome former captain of the England cricket team, Alec Stewart OBE, to one of their cricket lessons as part of the Clydesdale Bank Ambassador programme.

The visit gave some of the Academy's Year 9 students the opportunity to practice the game and hone their cricketing skills while receiving tips and guidance from Alec.

Around 20 students took to the crease to try out their bowling and batting technique under the watchful eye of the most capped English test match cricketer of all time.

PE teacher Tom Peterson ran the session and was thrilled to meet his idol. He said: "As a youngster, Alec was one of my sporting heroes. It was a privilege for the students and me to work with him and learn from his experiences."

Tom was joined by Rupert Evans, Head of Cricket and Dick Giles, County Girls Under 15 coach from the Oxfordshire Cricket Board who also helped to mentor the youngsters.

Rupert said: "The session was great for the Academy—to be able to play alongside someone of Alec's calibre gives the students and the cricket game a real boost. The county board was really pleased to be involved."

A WIN AT WYCOMBE

By Joe Parker

Wycombe Wanderers v Oxford United at Adams Park

AFTER no win since mid December and no points since the 21 December, Oxford United were looking to end a terrible run having picked up just one point from Boxing Day until 11 January. They were trying to do this by carrying on their unbeaten away record against Gareth Ainsworth's Wycombe Wanderers.

The game against Wycombe was a feisty affair when just 15 minutes in Steven Craig flew in late on Johnny Mullins and was lucky not get a yellow card or even have been sent off.

But just five minutes later Steven Craig again this time lead with his arm, and planted it straight into the face of Johnny Mullins and this time the ref had no hesitation in showing a red card which meant that Wycombe had to play 70 minutes with only ten men.

Before the red card the game was pretty dull with only one shot being fired by James Constable who fired just over on the turn. After the sending off, the hosts dropped to two lots of four with man of the match and hard working Matt McClure up top on his own.

The hosts were only really dangerous from set pieces and on the counter attack and it was a question of when and not if Oxford were going to score. This was the pattern for the rest of the first half.

Oxford's Manager Chris Wilder made just one change at half time with striker Deane Smalley coming on for defender Michael Raynes to try and do more going forward after a lack lustre performance in the first half. That change didn't really help the Us because of top draw performances from the Wycombe centre backs Leon Johnson and Gary Doherty.

The play was still mostly in the midfield with just a few chances, the best falling to Tom Newey who had his header cleared at the last by Leon Johnson. On the 66th minute James Constable blasted over the bar but this time in to the 1800 Oxford fans. Ryan Williams did the same just minutes later.

Oxford were throwing everything and the kitchen sink at Wycombe but just could not find a way through their tidy and well organised defence until the 87th minute when the ball came to Ryan Williams who put in a cross that fell to an Oxford player who laid it off to Nicky Wore who smashed in a sumptuous half volley in to Matt Ingram's left side.

Connor and the keeper could not get there and that seemed to be the winner for Oxford United and it was with just one last chance falling again to James Constable.

Final score:
Wycombe Wanderers 0 Oxford United 1

Academy boys are champions

THE Oxford Academy boys Under 12 Futsal team were crowned Junior Sports Team of the Year at this year's Oxfordshire Sports Awards.

Winning the title marks the end of a remarkable year for the young team of eight who only started training in January. The team has gone from strength to strength having fought through four group matches, a semi-final and warded of nine other regional winners before being crowned FA National champions in June after beating AC Finchley in the FA Futsal Youth Festival.

30 finalists across ten different categories joined host Jerome Sale, BBC Oxford Presenter and a host of other invited guests at the Kassam Stadium on Friday 29 November to celebrate the wealth of talent and dedication seen in sport and physical activity across the county.

Congratulations to Kyran Lofthouse, Harley Giles, Joseph Gaul, Jamie McSporran, Cian Gaul, Twariq Yusuf, Tom Griffiths, Matty Simms (and managers Grant Thomas and Ashley Hollis).